A Relaxation Training Workshop Manual Adapted for Indigenous Male Offenders in a Correctional Setting

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March 12th, 2018

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The procedures in this staff training manual/workshop are meant to be used by the agency staff, as part of the broader services they provide, or under supervision of agency staff.
Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my parents and my sister who have supported me throughout. Without their constant love and support I would not have made it this far.
Abstract
In recent years Correctional Services Canada has become aware of the over representation of the Indigenous population within their institutions. Analysis of the increase in Indigenous male offenders prompted CSC to introduce and offer Indigenous specific programming. The prevalence of intergenerational trauma and mental health disorders among this population has highlighted the importance of offering more Indigenous specific treatment options. Through a review of CSC’s current programs, it was identified that relaxation training was included in other programs offered by CSC but not offered to the Indigenous population. As relaxation techniques have been shown to decrease symptoms prevalent among those experiencing trauma, Indigenous specific relaxation training should benefit this population. Therefore, a comprehensive manual was created for Correctional Services Canada that outlined a three-day workshop on relaxation training. The manual incorporates cultural aspects and focuses on three relaxation techniques: progressive muscle relaxation, cue relaxation, and counting breathing. Due to lack of time, results were not collected on the effectiveness of this manual; therefore, this thesis focuses on the creation of the manual. Furthermore, this thesis examines current empirically based evidence to support the development of this workshop. Strengths, limitations, and recommendations for future studies are addressed.
Acknowledgments
Leah Todd

I would like to acknowledge my supervisor without whom I would not have been able to complete this thesis. Her support and advice was extremely valuable and pushed me throughout the writing process.

Correctional Service Canada

I would like to thank CSC for allowing me to complete my final placement within their organization. I would also like to thank Lisa Wlock for providing me with as many opportunities as she could find and believing in me. Finally, I would like to give a special thanks to Mckenzie Parker one of my supervisors within my Correctional Services Canada placement. Her passion for programs and her knowledge of Indigenous culture helped form my thesis. Without her guidance and compassion, I would not have had such an amazing and eye-opening experience.
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Chapter I: Introduction

Within the correctional setting it has been found that there are a disproportionate number of Indigenous offenders (Roberts, & Reid, 2017). According to Corrections Service Canada (CSC) (2013), Indigenous people made up 17% of federal offenders in 2007 while only making up 2.7% of the Canadian population. Within Ontario 10% of offenders incarcerated are of Indigenous descent (Indigenous Offender Statistics, 2013). According to Roberts and Reid (2017), the number of convictions and incarcerations of Indigenous individuals has been increasing from 1978 to 2014. They state that although there have been changes in the sentencing procedures of Indigenous the number of offenders has still risen. Indigenous offenders are more often to be rated as high risk, stay longer in their sentence, be sent to segregation or to a maximum-security prison, and are more likely to breach parole then non-Indigenous offenders (Aboriginal Offenders, 2013).

This over representation of Indigenous as well as the rehabilitation model of the current correctional system has led to the introduction of Indigenous specific programs (Commissioners Directive, 2013). According to the CSC, these programs focus on similar material as mainstream programs; however, they have been adapted to include a strong connection to culture and spirituality. Programs offered include multiple facets of intervention which target violence, substance abuse, sexual offences, and other risky behaviours (Commissioners Directive, 2013). What is addressed throughout this integrated model of treatment works to increase self-monitoring skills, problem solving, emotional regulation, and so forth (Commissioners Directive, 2013). Although most of the content is similar not all the content of mainstream programs was incorporated into Indigenous specific programming. As CSC uses progressive muscle relaxation (PMR), counting breathing (CB), and cue relaxation (CR) in mainstream programming to increase emotional and anger management it may also be beneficial for the Indigenous offender population to be taught it as well.

Indigenous populations have a prevalence of intergenerational trauma through colonization. This is demonstrated in the high levels of post-traumatic stress, substance abuse problems, and high suicide rates among this population (Heffernan, Anderson, Davidson, & Kinner, 2015). This may be a contributing factor to the high rate of Indigenous people being federally incarcerated. According to Bombay, Matheson, and Anisman (2009), stress can cause immediate effects; however, it can also have repercussions that can last much longer. They state that Indigenous people have many contributing factors that can increase vulnerability in regard to acquiring symptoms of intergenerational trauma. They note that PTSD, depression, and anxiety are commonly experienced by this population. As most mental health disorders do not occur individually it is likely that a person with one disorder will also have symptoms of another (Bombay et al., 2009). Stress is found to be the most common of symptoms faced by this population (Bombay et al., 2009). Symptoms of stress can range from psychological distress to physical symptoms such as high blood pressure, fast breathing, impulsive reactions, and dysregulated reactions to other stressors (Bombay et al., 2009).

Relaxation training is used to target stress symptoms as well as target symptoms of PTSD, depression, and anxiety. As relaxation training has been shown to significantly decrease these symptoms it may be helpful for Indigenous offenders to receive more thorough relaxation training (Taylor, Thordarson, Maxfield, Fedoroff, Lovell, and Ogrodniczuk, 2003). Relaxation training has shown to increase the benefits of other treatments and decrease symptoms of anxiety, stress, and hypervigilance (Taylor, Thordarson, Maxfield, Fedoroff, Lovell, and Ogrodniczuk, 2003). The Indigenous population is overrepresented within the federal system
and are prone to mental health disorders. Due to the reasons noted above it is important for different treatment options to be investigated. A workshop on teaching proper relaxation techniques should increase positive change for this population and may increase the research conducted on possible interventions. This workshop manual will be written with the expectation that adapting a main stream program technique for an Indigenous population will increase the knowledge of staff in regards to relaxation techniques and about the Indigenous population. Overall due to the issues surrounding high incarceration rates and mental health within this population relaxation training should be beneficial for Indigenous offenders.

This thesis will discuss all aspects of the workshop manual in five parts. The first chapter will be the introduction which will give an overview of the topic that was chosen. A literature review will be the second chapter and will contain a significant amount of information on the target population and the intervention chosen. Format and method, results, and finally a discussion will make up the remaining three chapters.
Chapter II: Literature Review

Introduction

This literature review was formed to advocate for the creation of a workshop manual for the use of correctional programs officers. Correctional programs officers are workers within the institution who facilitate programs for offenders. The manual will inform CPO’s on how to implement a three-day relaxation training workshop for Indigenous male offenders who are currently receiving programs from CSC. This will be used to decrease symptoms related to intergenerational trauma and add to current CSC programs in decreasing recidivism. This literature review will introduce CSC programming and discuss the relaxation techniques and their relevance for this population.

CSC Programs

Correctional Services Canada programs are based off the RNR model. RNR stands for Risk Need and Responsivity (Andrews, Bonta, & Wormith, 2011). Andrews, Bonta, and Wormith (2011), state that the RNR model is considered the most widely used instrument for evaluating interventions for this population. They also note that it is incorporated into a wide range of risk assessments and tools used to assess risk. Risk is defined as assessing the level of risk of each offender and placing them in a program that matches that risk level (Risk-need-responsivity, 2007). A high-risk offender would then be placed in a high-risk program and a medium risk offender in a moderate risk program. Need focuses on the behaviours that have shown to decrease recidivism when targeted (Risk-need-responsivity, 2007). Other needs that have not shown decreases in recidivism when targeted are called non-criminogenic needs and consist of seven main targets (Risk-need-responsivity, 2007). Criminogenic needs are antisocial personality, antisocial associates, antisocial attitudes, substance abuse, family and relationships, school or work, and recreational activities (Risk-need-responsivity, 2007). Lastly, responsivity is taken into consideration for treatment. Responsivity considers each offender’s unique characteristics and personality which may interfere with an individual’s ability to show positive behavioural change (Offender treatability, 2007). Factors such as cognitive deficits, motivation, and learning style need to be addressed to insure program effectiveness (Andrews, Bonta, & Wormith, 2011).

CSC used the RNR principles to create programs that aim to reduce recidivism among offenders. Currently CSC is using an integrated correctional program model as its interventions for the offender population. The integrated correctional program model starts with a primer program which consists of 10-11 sessions (Integrated correctional program model, 2014). This program introduces offenders to how programs work and is used to figure out what risk factors and subsequent goals each offender should have (Integrated correctional program model, 2014). Each session is approximately two hours long and is run by a program facilitator. (Integrated
The primer program introduces topics that will be focused on during the main program: substance abuse, relationships, emotions, thoughts, and common traps (Personal communication, 2017). Once an offender has completed the primer program and their goals have been identified, they attend a program that matches their level of risk (Integrated correctional program model, 2014). CSC offers a high intensity ICPM which consists of 97 group sessions and a moderate intensity ICPM that has 50 group sessions (Integrated correctional program model, 2014). These programs are designed for mainstream offenders. Mainstream offenders are individuals who are non-Indigenous and who are not considered sexual offenders. CSC also offers adapted, Indigenous, and sex offender high and moderate ICPM programs (Integrated correctional program model, 2014). These programs range from 50 to 112 sessions and are approximately two hours long (Integrated correctional program model, 2014). Following completion of the main program each offender is eligible for a maintenance program in the institution as well as in the community (Integrated correctional program model, 2014).

The AICPM or Indigenous ICPM consists of 62 sessions for the moderate and 112 sessions for the high intensity program each with sessions two hours long in length (Integrated correctional program model, 2014). This program targets risk factors specific to this population and has a strong focus on culture and spirituality. Like other programming it focuses on goals and criminogenic needs such as attitudes and beliefs. CSC created programming specific to the Indigenous population as they recognized their over representation within the correctional setting. Offenders that are currently participating in programming or who have recently completed a program within CSC will be targeted for this intervention.

Indigenous Population

The Indigenous population has been over represented within the correctional setting for many generations (Roberts, & Reid, 2017). These individuals have shown to have a high rate of PTSD, anxiety, depression, suicidal ideations, and substance abuse disorders (Bombay et al., 2009). Moreover, Indigenous offenders are shown to have higher rates of recidivism, serve longer sentences, and are at a higher risk than those who are non-Indigenous (Bombay et al., 2009). Jones and Day (2011), state that Indigenous people have been impacted by intergenerational trauma caused by colonization. Residential schools and the 60’s scoop were traumatic events that have impacted the current generation of Indigenous people (Jones, & Day, 2011).

A large component to Indigenous interventions have shown to be successful when considering the loss of connection to culture and family colonization caused (Jones, & Day, 2011). Many techniques have been adapted to decrease these risk factors from non-Indigenous programming; however, there is a lack of research on other techniques that may be beneficial for this population. CSC has put a strong focus on Indigenous programming as they recognized the lack of culturally specific intervention options for this population (Commissioners Directive, 2013). The lack of available research on the efficacy of relaxation training for this population supports the need for the creation of this manual.

Relaxation techniques

Progressive muscle relaxation (PMR) is a technique that is used commonly in relaxation training. This technique requires an individual to concentrate on the whole body one part at a time (Stress Management, 2017). PMR begins with participants being asked to get into a comfortable position and to take deep breathes. Then each muscle is systematically targeted by flexing the muscles one at a time for 10 seconds and then completely relaxing them. This is done for each muscle until the body is relaxed. This technique may be beneficial for participants who
have a hard time remaining still for long periods of time as it incorporates movement. Targeting different muscle groups not only enhances relaxation it may also improve one’s ability to ignore potential distractions when trying to relax. Full concentration is put into the body’s muscles which encourages self-monitoring and can increase knowledge of physical reactions to emotions (Grant, Stein, Woods, & Keuthin, 2011).

Cue relaxation is a technique that was developed by and used by CSC. This technique is used by training the body to associate certain words to relaxation (VPP-HI Manual, Personal communication, n.d). The technique requires participants to get into a comfortable position and begin breathing in deeply. As the participant becomes relaxed they say the words “breathe in” during an inhale and “relax” during an exhale (VPP-HI Manual, Personal communication, n.d). This encourages not only practice in breathing but also provides a word that is associated with a relaxed state (VPP-HI Manual, Personal communication, n.d). CSC proposes that this technique can relieve stress and can enhance the effectiveness of anger management interventions. Moreover, CSC states that cue breathing is effective when needing quick release of emotional arousal and physical tension.

Counting breathing is a technique that works with a similar framework as cue breathing. This technique requires you to get into a comfortable position and breathe deeply in and out. Instead of using cue words you would count your breathing as you exhale (VPP-HI Manual, Personal communication, n.d). Counting your breathing allows for longer moments of concentration and is a quick way to become relaxed (VPP-HI Manual, Personal communication, n.d).

A rationale will be given for adapting non-Indigenous programing to suit an Indigenous population and discuss the limitations and strengths found in relevant studies. This thesis will outline the rationale for using relaxation techniques and information about the prevalence of mental health distress among the population. Relaxation techniques have been shown to be effective in decreasing a multitude of persisting disorders among various populations. Most relaxation training works best in conjunction with other treatments such as cognitive behavioural therapy, motivational interviewing, and dialectical behaviour therapy (Stapleton, Taylor, & Asmundson, 2006). Relaxation training has shown to increase the benefits of other treatments and decrease symptoms of anxiety, stress, and hypervigilance (Taylor, Thordarson, Maxfield, Fedoroff, Lovell, and Ogrodniczuk, 2003). According to Zucker, Samuelson, Muench, Greenberg, and Gevirtz (2009), progressive muscle relaxation, a relaxation training technique, was shown to reduce Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) symptoms as well as increase sleep regulation. This may be beneficial as it was shown that Indigenous offenders in Australia were found to have high levels of PTSD, psychological distress, and experienced trauma (Heffernan, Anderson, Davidson, & Kinner, 2015). Hossack and Bentall (1996), also stated that relaxation techniques had been shown to decrease stress and anxiety symptoms for those who had experienced trauma. Lewis et al. (2015), stated that relaxation training increases positive outcomes when participants are later confronted with a stress inducing situation. This would be beneficial in the correctional setting as there are often stressful situations throughout offenders’ time served and in their life once released. Relaxation training has also been shown to decrease feelings of anger and guilt; however, it was stated that effect size did not show a significant reduction (Stapleton, Taylor, & Asmundson, 2006). Stapleton, Taylor, and Asmundson (2006), noted that because of the low effect size shown in their study that relaxation training should be conducted adjacent to other treatments.
Parker, Gilbert, and Thoreson (1978), conducted a study on relaxation techniques and its efficacy in decreasing blood pressure for people with substance abuse disorders. They state that meditation and progressive muscle relaxation showed a reduction in blood pressure among participants after the sessions were completed. Weekes, Morison, Millson, and Fettig (1995), reported that alcohol abuse was prevalent within native and metis adult offenders. This high level of substance abuse among the population supports the efficacy of this workshop. The inclusion of relaxation training may be beneficial in combating the physical symptoms of anxiety as well as improving body awareness.

Marsh, Coholic, Cote-Meek, and Najavits (2015), state that adapting western treatments to Indigenous programs can be effective in reducing symptoms of intergenerational trauma and substance abuse. They note that including a more holistic view and culture to these programs encourages participation and healing among this population. According to Marsh et al (2015), program adaptation and implementation must include advice and participation of an elder to effect significant changes. The manual will be created with the advice of an Indigenous offender to increase the chance of a significant effect size.
Chapter III: Method

Participants

Participants will include Indigenous men ages 18 and up who have committed a crime that has incurred a federal offence and are currently incarcerated in a maximum-security prison. These offenders can be First Nations, Metis, or Inuit people. Participants will be chosen based on their participation in a correctional AICPM program. There should be a minimum of two participants attending the workshop. Participants will be referred by the elder or programs officer if it is deemed that the offender would benefit from more training in relaxation techniques. Exclusion criteria will be if the offenders are not participating in an Indigenous program or are currently placed in segregation. Constricting the group to those who are participating in programs will be done to increase chances of significant behaviour change. This decision was based on the research that suggests relaxation techniques show little increases in desired behaviour when conducted alone.

Offenders who are not given a high-risk status during intake are not asked to participate in programs which excludes them from participating in this workshop. There will be no exclusion criteria based on current offenses; however, those participants who have a sex offense on their record will be given a separate group. Sex offenders are given a separate group because they are a vulnerable subpopulation in prison and don’t typically mix with other offenders in programs due to the nature of their crime. Participants will be asked to participate in this program based off exclusion criteria and will be given the choice whether they would like to attend. The workshop should have 2 to 10 offenders participating in each group. In summary offenders who have been assessed as moderate to high risk, participated in AICPM programs, or are currently participating in AICPM programs are eligible to complete the workshop.

Facilitators

This manual will be created for Indigenous correctional program officers and an elder to implement. Both the elder and the programs officer will be asked to facilitate this workshop to increase the workshops success. Advice from the elder will be taken throughout the creation of the manual to ensure that the content included is culturally acceptable. If the elder feels that a ceremony will be necessary, an extra day may be added to accommodate. The workshop should be run in conjunction with or right after CSC’s current Indigenous program.

Consent

Consent will be obtained by the programs officer who is conducting the workshop and the offenders will be informed that their attendance is voluntary. They will be allowed to discontinue at any time throughout the sessions without reprisal. The benefits and risks of attendance will be explained thoroughly with each individual participant during a short interview prior to the start of the workshop. This interview will be conducted to inform the offender of the program as well as obtain consent from participants.

Design and Materials

The manual was created during a 14-week placement at a maximum-security institution. A gap was identified in the level of relaxation training the Indigenous population received throughout their programming. As initiatives surrounding Indigenous programming are now becoming more emphasized in the correctional setting it was deemed appropriate to create a manual to target the needs of this population. The manual will consist of information regarding the relevance of relaxation training for this population, scripts for each relaxation activity, as well as assessments and handouts. Scripts for progressive muscle relaxation, counting breathing, and cue relaxation will be provided to both the facilitators and participants. Instructions on how
to conduct each day of the workshop will be provided to increase participation within the session. The manual will also include a rationale, objectives, session overviews, and materials that will be needed for each day. Each session will begin with a circle and smudge and the elder may decide that a talking circle or teaching may be necessary for that day. Each section of the manual will provide an overview of what to do should the session run longer than expected. Evaluation forms will be provided to both the facilitators to ensure that the manual has relevant and effective content. A form will also be available for facilitators to provide to participants to ascertain how they felt about the workshops teachings. The workshop will be conducted for two hours over three days starting during the spring and can be conducted throughout summer and fall as needed. Materials that will be needed are the scripts for each technique, handouts for the participants, pencil or pen, and ceremonial objects.

Setting

The workshop will take place when possible in the outdoor Indigenous area or inside in the Indigenous room. Outside workshops will be the preferred setting as it will increase the connection to the earth. The facilitators will decide which setting they would like to perform the workshop. Operational demands of each day will also be taken into consideration when deciding the setting for the sessions. The workshop will be conducted during spring, summer, and fall to accommodate outdoor facilitation. Winter sessions may be possible and alternative session planning will be included within the manual. This will be done to accommodate any participants who are attending a winter program who may require more help with relaxation training. If a workshop is held within the winter months the workshop will be conducted in the Indigenous room.
Chapter IV: Results

A manual was created to instruct facilitators on how to implement a relaxation training workshop for Indigenous male offenders within a correctional facility. The facilitators guide (Appendix A) describes a three-day workshop for this population that focuses around relaxation techniques and stress. A participant workbook (Appendix B) is provided for facilitators to give to participants. Facilitators will also receive the handouts provided in the workbook which will be located throughout the facilitators guide. Overall this manual provides Correctional Programs Officer’s a detailed manual on how to conduct a relaxation training workshop with this population.
Chapter V: Discussion

As the Indigenous population has been shown to be over represented within corrections (Commissioners Directive, 2013) it is important to evaluate and add to available programs. Intergenerational trauma, high rates of suicide, PTSD, and substance abuse contribute to the unique needs of this population, thus more extensive research is needed to develop and implement best practice treatment options (Heffernan et al., 2015). This workshop will work to encourage research and promote positive coping skills, relaxation techniques, with the intention of decreasing negative behaviours and symptoms of mental health issues among the Indigenous population within corrections.

Strengths

Strengths of this workshop is that it uses culturally-based best practice techniques that have shown to target problem areas among offenders: emotions management, anxiety, depression, and PTSD. CSC uses relaxation techniques within current non-Indigenous programming which suggests it may benefit the Indigenous population as well. Relaxation techniques should increase desirable behaviour and also contribute to motivating positive change.

The workshop will not run for more than three days which will increase chances of participation among offenders and be minimally demanding for the facilitator and elder. Implementing a shorter workshop is more achievable and realistic given the barriers in a maximum-security institution. The manual was made to be both structured and flexible. Aside from positive outcomes for individual offenders, this workshop promotes ongoing research into programs for this over represented population. The elder will be able to use this time to promote change through teachings and increase rapport with the offenders and staff. This workshop can be implemented using minimal financial and staff resources, both of which are commonly identified as barriers to providing quality services for the inmate population.

Limitations

There are limitations surrounding implementation of the workshop, participation, and availability. The manual will detail each day’s activities and what information will be given; however, each person who implements the workshop may do it in a different way. The manual is designed to be both structured and flexible. This may change the outcome of the workshop from group to group and the ability for future research studies to attain consistent and valid data. The workshop should be implemented outdoors; however, this may not be possible. This can also be effected by availability of staff, time, and participants.

Within the correctional setting it can be difficult to maintain a program over days due to possible operational issues that interfere with group facilitation. During operational issues, offenders may not be allowed to be moved around the institution which means the workshop would not be able to take place. Timelines would then be off and it may be that time will run over. Furthermore, the ceremonial aspect as well as teachings from the elder may take longer then scheduled. The workshop is flexible to allow for both the traditional teachings and the relaxation training to be included; however, the flexibility of the workshop means that it is up to the facilitator to ensure all aspects of the workshop are given equal time and opportunity for learning. Participants may also not attend or participate in each day of the workshop and so miss out on the technique that will be shown. As the workshop is a voluntary service, consistent participation depends on the clients level of motivation to attend. The manual itself will be a new concept which may be a limitation due to the learning process as the facilitators primarily learn
through reading. As this has not been implemented prior to the creation of this manual the efficacy of the adapted version of relaxation training has not been proven.

**Multilevel Challenges**

**Client Level.**

Offenders may refuse to participate in programs or decide to stop participating in programs before completion as it is a voluntary service. It has been shown that offenders’ displaying denial, minimization of offenses, and psychopathy have low engagement scores (O’Brien & Daffern, 2017) which can affect attendance. Furthermore, Vuk (2017), noted that offenders spend much of their time in unstructured leisure activities and many are concerned about attending self-improvement activities. Clients may also deal with the stigma that they are bad and can be treated as such by workers. The environment itself is not conducive to creating a positive atmosphere for clients who are unwilling to change and can impact their level of participation within programs. Techniques taught to inmates can also be hard to use within this environment.

**Program Level.**

Barriers that may cause problems with proper program delivery can be lack of training, inconsistent implementation, and compassion fatigue. These challenges can affect treatment efficacy and validity. According to Johnson (2016), compassion fatigue can cause facilitators to experience symptoms identical to PTSD. Johnson states that because of this facilitators are unable to provide efficient services or treatment to clients. Furthermore, he notes that there is a high rate of compassion fatigue when working with offenders who have experienced trauma. As the Indigenous population has a high prevalence of PTSD through intergenerational trauma (Bombay et al., 2009) this may increase the risk of compassion fatigue among the program facilitators. Cunningham (2017), stated that facilitators with negative perceptions of offenders impacts intervention and creates barriers when building rapport. Thorough communication with the client and structured session planning with days added in for possible disruption are put into place to minimize these barriers. Clients may also refuse to participate in programs which can disrupt the ability of groups to be run.

**Organizational Level.**

At the organizational level, there are challenges involving time, training, and staff. Due to regular security shut downs, programs which can be completed within three to four months can last as long as seven to eight months. This can cause problems within the institution as timing can be very inconsistent due to prison shut downs or programs not being completed in the estimated time frame. Given that the treatment approach within CSC is interdisciplinary, communication between service providers is essential. However, there are a number of factors that can negatively impact the effectiveness and timeliness of communication between staff members.

**Societal Level.**

There is a negative stigma placed upon the offender population. The debate between rehabilitation and punishment is prevalent among society. The belief that there should be more focus on punishment rather than a more therapeutic approach can hinder the interventions future results. Many people within society view offenders as inherently bad which can decrease available resources, discourage positive behavioral change, and decrease self-esteem for the client. Society may vote for political parties that reduce rehabilitation resources for offenders in favour of longer sentences and harsher punishment. Thus, education around risk and risk management is important.
Future Recommendations

Despite the over represented Indigenous population among Canada’s federal prison system, there continues to be a lack of specific interventions that address this populations unique needs. Future research should be conducted to further cultural competence so that we have a greater understanding of issues specific to indigenous offenders and what interventions will be the most helpful in decreasing recidivism. Outcome research that integrates cultural values and beliefs into the provision of services would be highly beneficial. As results were not collected on the efficacy of this treatment it would be beneficial to complete this program within the correctional setting to acquire viable data. Relaxation training should be investigated thoroughly within Indigenous communities with youth as well as with offenders who have been released. Indigenous men have shown to be overrepresented within the correctional system and because of this, adapted interventions should be examined more thoroughly for this population.
References


Appendix A

Relaxation Training Workshop
Facilitation Manual

Created by: Courtney Herritt for the use of Correctional Services Canada
Relaxation Training

Overview

Rationale
Objectives
Materials

Day 1

Special instructions
Rationale
Objectives
Session overview
Materials
Session content

Day 2

Special instructions
Rationale
Objectives
Session overview
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Day 3

Special instructions

Rationale

Objectives

Session overview

Materials

Session content

References
Overview

Objectives

The manual will inform Correctional Programs Officer’s on how to implement a three-day relaxation training workshop for Indigenous male offenders who are currently receiving programs from CSC. There are three main objectives for this manual. First, it will be used to decrease symptoms related to intergenerational trauma and add to current CSC programs in decreasing recidivism. Secondly, to teach relaxation skills to a population that is overrepresented within the correctional system. Finally this manual was created to decrease common mental health problems within the Indigenous offender population.

This guide will provide CPO’s with lesson plans for each of the three days of the workshop.

Day 1:

- Introduction of the Elder and Programs officer
- Talk by the Elder
- Introducing the FIRE scale for balance check
- Pre test questionnaire
- Explanation of what relaxation techniques are and how they are helpful.
- Deep Breathing practice
- Counting breathing activity
- Balance check

Day 2:

- Balance check
• Time for the Elder to speak if they deem it necessary

• Discussion about deep breathing and counting breathing activity

• Progressive muscle relaxation explained

• Progressive muscle relaxation activity

Day 3:

• Balance Check

• Discussion about progressive muscle relaxation activity

• Cue relaxation activity

• Activity of groups choice

• Elder talk

• Discussion about techniques learned

• Post test questionnaire

Materials

  o Relaxation technique scripts

  o Pre-post test questionnaire

  o Paper

  o Pencil

  o FIRE. scale handout
Special instructions

Throughout the session an Elder will be present. It is important to note that if the Elder wishes to speak that they have no time limit. Be aware of time management and plan accordingly. If you run out of time continue the rest of the lesson the following session.

Rationale

This session introduces the facilitators and group members which serves the purpose of beginning to build rapport with facilitators and participants. Reintroducing the balance check will help group members recall how they are doing and give the facilitators an idea of what level of risk the members are at. Teaching the importance of relaxation and relaxation techniques will inform the group as to why they are being taught these skills. The goal of this day is to set the foundation for these skills and impress upon the group how these techniques can help them. Including the Elder for each day will allow for cultural expression and freedom.

Objectives

- To introduce the importance of learning relaxation techniques
- Reintroduce the balance check
- Develop deep breathing skills.
- Learn counting breathing activity
Session overview

✦ Introduction of the Elder and Programs officer
✦ Talk by the Elder
✦ Pre test questionnaire
✦ Explanation of what relaxation techniques are and how they are helpful.
✦ Deep Breathing practice
✦ Counting breathing activity
✦ Balance check

Materials

✦ Ceremonial Objects
✦ Handout: FIRE scale
✦ Handout: Pre-test Questionnaire
✦ Handout: Deep breathing
✦ Handout: Counting breathing
Session Content

Introduction (15 minutes * Elder may require more time): Start the session by introducing yourself and sharing a bit about what your position is and some of your educational background. Introduce the Elder and allow them to talk about who they are and why it is important that they be present.

Pre-test Questionnaire (15 minutes): Go through the questionnaire with the participants. You will want to look through it prior to the first meeting so that you can be able to explain how to fill it out. You will explain that the purpose of this questionnaire is to determine whether there is a need for a relaxation training workshop. Give them time to fill out the questionnaire and assist participants if needed.

Discuss Relaxation (40 minutes): You will want to summarize what you will be doing for the next few days. Let the participants know that they will be learning techniques that will work to decrease symptoms of stress. Emphasize that the impacts of intergenerational trauma or their Indigenous Social History (ASH) have increased the risk for participants to feel stress, anxiety, and depression. Relaxation techniques have shown to be effective in decreasing these symptoms. You or the Elder may add
facts about intergenerational impacts and ASH. Discuss how important it is to have these skills when trying to stay away from the shadow road.

Ask participants questions such as:

✦ Have any of you been taught relaxation techniques before? If so what kinds?
   Did you find it helpful?

✦ What do you do to calm down if you are feeling stressed?

✦ What does stress look like to you?

Explain that although these techniques have shown to be effective everyone is different and one may work for one participant and not for the other. Therefore it is important to be taught multiple skills instead of just one.

Refer to handout 1.2 in participants workbook that talks about stress and symptoms. Review this with participants and allow for questions.

Deep Breathing (20 minutes): Refer to handout 1.3 that provides a script on deep breathing. Go over the sheet with the participants and explain that breathing seems easy but can be difficult. Ask participants to get into a comfortable position before starting this exercise. Once participants are ready ask participants to close their eyes
as you read through the deep breathing script.

Ask questions that help facilitate a discussion on how we need to train ourselves to relax because it is not something we allow ourselves to do intentionally.

“How did you feel about this exercise? Do you feel more relaxed?”

“What came up for you?”

“What if anything, do you find challenging about these exercises? Why might that be?”

**Counting Breathing (20 minutes):** Refer to handout 1.3 and review with participants.

Go through this activity the same way as the deep breathing exercise. Ask participants to get into a comfortable position and close their eyes. Read through the script for participants.

Ask questions that help facilitate a discussion on how we need to train ourselves to relax because it is not something we allow ourselves to do intentionally.

“How did you feel about this exercise? Do you feel more relaxed?”

“What came up for you?”
“What if anything, do you find challenging about these exercises? Why might that be?”

**Recap and Check In (10 minutes):** Discuss with the group what they thought of both techniques and answer any questions they may have. Inform the group that the beginning of the next two sessions will include a check in to see how everyone is feeling. They will be asked to practice the techniques on their own after each session.
Handouts Session 1

Handout 1.1.

**PERCEIVED STRESS SCALE**

The questions in this scale ask you about your feelings and thoughts during the last month. In each case, you will be asked to indicate by circling how often you felt or thought a certain way.

Name ___________________________ Date ____________

Age ______ Gender (Circle): M F Other ___________________________

0 = Never  1 = Almost Never  2 = Sometimes  3 = Fairly Often  4 = Very Often

1. In the last month, how often have you been upset because of something that happened unexpectedly? 0 1 2 3 4
2. In the last month, how often have you felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life? 0 1 2 3 4
3. In the last month, how often have you felt nervous and "stressed"? 0 1 2 3 4
4. In the last month, how often have you felt confident about your ability to handle your personal problems? 0 1 2 3 4
5. In the last month, how often have you felt that things were going your way? 0 1 2 3 4
6. In the last month, how often have you found that you could not cope with all the things that you had to do? 0 1 2 3 4
7. In the last month, how often have you been able to control irritations in your life? 0 1 2 3 4
8. In the last month, how often have you felt that you were on top of things? 0 1 2 3 4
9. In the last month, how often have you been angered because of things that were outside of your control? 0 1 2 3 4
10. In the last month, how often have you felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them? 0 1 2 3 4


Stress is one way that our bodies respond to the demands of our lives. A little bit of stress can be healthy—it keeps us alert and productive. However, all too often, we experience too much stress. Too much stress can result in serious physical, emotional, and behavioral symptoms.

### Symptoms of Stress

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical</th>
<th>Emotional</th>
<th>Behavioral</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☑ Fatigue</td>
<td>☑ Sleep difficulties</td>
<td>☑ Unhealthy eating (over or under eating)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☑ Stomachache</td>
<td>☑ Increased irritability and anger</td>
<td>☑ Drug or alcohol use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>☑ Depression or sadness</td>
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<tr>
<td>☑ Headaches and migraines</td>
<td>☑ Restlessness</td>
<td>☑ Constant thoughts about stressors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☑ Indigestion</td>
<td>☑ Inability to focus</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☑ Nausea</td>
<td>☑ Mood instability</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☑ Increased sweating</td>
<td>☑ Decreased sex drive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Weakened immune system
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deep Breathing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✩ Sit or lie flat in a comfortable position.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✩ Put one hand on your belly just below your ribs and the other hand on your chest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✩ Take a deep breath in through your nose, and let your belly push your hand out. Your chest should not move.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✩ Breathe out through pursed lips as if you were whistling. Feel the hand on your belly go in, and use it to push all the air out.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✩ Do this breathing 3 to 10 times. Take your time with each breath.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✩ Notice how you feel at the end of the exercise.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Counting Breathing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✩ Start taking slow deep breathes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✩ As you are breathing start counting your breaths.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✩ Each time you let your breath out count.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✩ Focus on your breathing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✩ As you inhale focus on the air coming in through your nostrils filling</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
your lungs.

✧ Focus on your chest filling with air.

✧ As you exhale focus on your chest falling and the air going through your lips.

✧ Count.

✧ Keep breathing slowly focusing on your breath and counting each breath
Special instructions

Throughout the session an Elder will be present. It is important to note that if the Elder wishes to speak that they have no time limit. Be aware of time management and plan accordingly. If you run out of time continue the rest of the lesson the following session.

Rationale

This session will provide group members with the chance to discuss the previous day’s techniques and ask any questions they may have. Allowing for the elder to provide a teaching or provide input on the technique will emphasize the importance of culture and relaxation. The goal is to provide feedback and encourage questions as well as introduce a new technique that the group can use.

Objectives

✦ Answer questions or concerns
✦ Integrate cultural view
✦ Learn about stress and physical symptoms
✦ Develop progressive muscle relaxation skill.

Session overview

✦ Balance check
✦ Time for the Elder to speak if they deem it necessary
Discussion about deep breathing and counting breathing activity

Teaching about stress and physical symptoms

Progressive muscle relaxation explained

Progressive muscle relaxation activity

Discussion

Materials

Ceremonial Objects

Handout: Progressive muscle relaxation

Handout: Stress

Handout: Deep breathing

Handout: Counting breathing
Session Content

Discussion (15 minutes): Start the session with a discussion surrounding techniques learned in the last session. Ask participants how they are currently feeling and if they had used the techniques after the prior session. Encourage them to discuss what did or did not work for them. Remind participants that they can alter or change any technique if they find a way that works for them. Provide members time to ask questions.

Elder Led Discussion (10 minutes*Elder may need more time then scheduled): The Elder may use this time to add to the discussion or add a teaching story. It is important to let the Elder take as much time as necessary; do not interrupt or try to interfere with the lesson.

Stress & Physical Symptoms (40 minutes)

Ask participants what the notice about their bodies when they are stressed. You may offer some suggestions: fast heart rate, sweating hands, and stomachache.

You may discuss the difference between the sympathetic nervous system and
parasympathetic nervous system if you deem it appropriate for your group.

- Relaxation techniques aim to keep the body in a resting state by activating the parasympathetic nervous system which controls rest and digest. The body can only be in one or the other. By activating the parasympathetic system you block off the sympathetic nervous system which controls our bodies stress hormones.

Go over what happens if someone remains in a high level of stress that may lead to health issues or increase stress

- Weakened immune system
- Sleep deprivation/over sleeping

Explain that when you are sleep deprived or you get sick it can increase common symptoms of stress.

Refer to Handout 2.1 and discuss what fight or flight is and how this effects our body. Discuss the handout with participants. Explain how relaxation techniques can keep our body out of fight or flight mode and can slow down our stress response.

**Progressive Muscle Relaxation Activity (40 minutes):** Refer to handout 2.2 that provides a script on Progressive Muscle Relaxation. You will have wanted to go over
the script prior to this session to ensure you can teach it effectively. Go over the sheet with the participants and explain that this exercise will focus on all parts of the body. Ask participants to get into a comfortable position before starting this exercise. Once participants are ready ask participants to close their eyes as you read through the progressive muscle relaxation script.

Ask questions that help facilitate a discussion on how we need to train ourselves to relax because it is not something we allow ourselves to do intentionally.

“How did you feel about this exercise? Do you feel more relaxed?”

“What came up for you?”

“What if anything, do you find challenging about these exercises? Why might that be?”

Explain that this technique can be used anywhere and that if they are feeling stressed they can focus their attention on only a few parts of the body. The act of flexing and relaxing can help decrease symptoms of stress such as tension and it can distract the mind.

**Recap and Check In (10 minutes):** Discuss with the group what they thought of the
technique and answer any questions they may have. Inform the group that the beginning of the next two sessions will include a check in to see how everyone is feeling. They will be asked to practice the techniques on their own after each session.
Handouts Session 2

The Fight-or-Flight Response
Fact Sheet

What is the fight-or-flight response?
The fight-or-flight response is one of the tools your body uses to protect you from danger. When you feel threatened, the fight-or-flight response is automatically triggered, and several physiological changes prepare you to either confront or flee from the threat.

What are the symptoms of fight-or-flight?
- Increased heart rate
- Racing thoughts
- Difficulty concentrating
- Dizziness or lightheadedness
- Nausea / "butterflies" in stomach
- Rapid, shallow breathing
- Shaking
- Sweating
- Tensed muscles

How is the fight-or-flight response triggered?
Even threats to emotional well-being, such as the fear of embarrassment before giving a presentation, can trigger the fight-or-flight response. In these cases, the symptoms often do more harm than good. An increased heart rate and sweating might help you escape from a bear, but they won't do much to help you look cool and collected during a presentation.

Is the fight-or-flight response bad?
Everyone will experience the fight-or-flight response at times, to varying degrees. Usually, it's natural, healthy, and not a problem. However, when the fight-or-flight response leads to excessive anger, anxiety, prolonged stress, or other problems, it might be time to intervene.

How can I manage the fight-or-flight response?
In addition to the fight-or-flight response, your body can also initiate an opposing relaxation response. Many symptoms of the relaxation response counteract fight-or-flight, such as slower and deeper breathing, relaxed muscles, and a slower heart rate. The relaxation response can be triggered by using relaxation skills, such as deep breathing or progressive muscle relaxation.
Handout 2.2

Progressive Muscle Relaxation Script

Progressive muscle relaxation is an exercise that relaxes your mind and body by progressively tensing and relaxing muscle groups throughout your entire body. You will tense each muscle group vigorously, but without straining, and then suddenly release the tension and feel the muscle relax. You will tense each muscle for about 5 seconds. If you have any pain or discomfort at any of the targeted muscle groups feel free to omit that step. Throughout this exercise you may visualize the muscles tensing and a wave of relaxation flowing over them as you release that tension. It is important that you keep breathing throughout the exercise. Now let’s begin.

Begin by finding a comfortable position either sitting or lying down in a location where you will not be interrupted. Allow your attention to focus only on your body. If you begin to notice your mind wandering, bring it back to the muscle you are working on.

Take a deep breath through your abdomen, hold for a few seconds, and exhale slowly. Again, as you breathe notice your stomach rising and your lungs filling with air.
As you exhale, imagine the tension in your body being released and flowing out of your body. And again inhale... and exhale. Feel your body already relaxing.

As you go through each step, remember to keep breathing.

Now let's begin. Tighten the muscles in your forehead by raising your eyebrows as high as you can. Hold for about five seconds. And abruptly release feeling that tension fall away.

Pause for about 10 seconds.

Now smile widely, feeling your mouth and cheeks tense. Hold for about 5 seconds, and release, appreciating the softness in your face.

Pause for about 10 seconds.

Next, tighten your eye muscles by squinting your eyelids tightly shut. Hold for about 5 seconds, and release.
Pause for about 10 seconds.

Gently pull your head back as if to look at the ceiling. Hold for about 5 seconds, and release, feeling the tension melting away.

Pause for about 10 seconds.

Now feel the weight of your relaxed head and neck sink.

Breath in...and out.

In...and out.

Let go of all the stress

In...and out.

Now, tightly, but without straining, clench your fists and hold this position until I say stop. Hold for about 5 seconds, and release.
Pause for about 10 seconds.

Now, flex your biceps. Feel that buildup of tension. You may even visualize that muscle tightening. Hold for about 5 seconds, and release, enjoying that feeling of limpness.

Breath in...and out.

Now tighten your triceps by extending your arms out and locking your elbows. Hold for about 5 seconds, and release.

Pause for about 10 seconds.

Now lift your shoulders up as if they could touch your ears. Hold for about 5 seconds, and quickly release, feeling their heaviness.

Pause for about 10 seconds.

Tense your upper back by pulling your shoulders back trying to make your shoulder blades touch. Hold for about 5 seconds, and release. Pause for about 10 seconds.
Tighten your chest by taking a deep breath in, hold for about 5 seconds, and exhale, blowing out all the tension.

Now tighten the muscles in your stomach by sucking in. Hold for about 5 seconds, and release. Pause for about 10 seconds.

Gently arch your lower back. Hold for about 5 seconds, relax. Pause for about 10 seconds.

Feel the limpness in your upper body letting go of the tension and stress, hold for about 5 seconds, and relax.

Tighten your thighs by pressing your knees together, as if you were holding a penny between them. Hold for about 5 seconds...and release.

Pause for about 10 seconds.

Now flex your feet, pulling your toes towards you and feeling the tension in your calves. Hold for about 5 seconds, and relax, feel the weight of your legs sinking down.
Pause for about 10 seconds.

Curl your toes under tensing your feet. Hold for about 5 seconds, release. Pause for about 10 seconds. Now imagine a wave of relaxation slowly spreading through your body beginning at your head and going all the way down to your feet.

Feel the weight of your relaxed body.

Breathe in...and out...in...out....in...out.
Day 3

Special instructions

Throughout the session an Elder will be present. It is important to note that if the Elder wishes to speak that they have no time limit. Be aware of time management and plan accordingly. If you run out of time continue the rest of the lesson the following session.

✧ Note that this is the last day of the workshop so if there is anything you wish to cover more fully plan for this in your lesson.

Rationale

This session will allow group members to discuss how they felt about the previous techniques learned and ask any questions. A talking circle will be conducted during this session to encourage participants to talk about their thoughts, feelings, and emotions during the workshop or in their life. The goal is to encourage the use of the techniques taught over the three days and emphasize the importance of their culture and relaxation.

Objectives

✧ To introduce the importance of learning relaxation techniques
✧ Reintroduce the balance check
✧ Develop deep breathing skills.
✧ Learn cue breathing activity
Session overview

✦ Balance Check
✦ Discussion about progressive muscle relaxation activity
✦ Cue relaxation activity
✦ Post test questionnaire
✦ Talking Circle

Materials

✦ Ceremonial Objects
✦ Handout: Post-test Questionnaire
✦ Handout: Deep breathing
✦ Handout: Counting breathing
✦ Handout: Progressive muscle relaxation
✦ Handout: Cue breathing
Session Content

**Discussion (15 minutes):** Start the session with a discussion surrounding techniques learned in the last two sessions. Ask participants how they are currently feeling and if they had used the techniques after the prior session. Encourage them to discuss what did or did not work for them. Remind participants that they can alter or change any technique if they find a way that works for them. Provide members time to ask questions.

**Cue Relaxation Activity (30 minutes):** Refer to handout 3.3 that provides a script on Cue relaxation. You will have wanted to go over the script prior to this session to ensure you can teach it effectively. Go over the sheet with the participants and explain that this exercise will focus on providing a subtle yet effective technique. Ask participants to get into a comfortable position before starting this exercise. Once participants are ready ask participants to close their eyes as you read through the cue relaxation script.

Ask questions that help facilitate a discussion on how we need to train ourselves to relax because it is not something we allow ourselves to do intentionally.
“How did you feel about this exercise? Do you feel more relaxed?”

“What came up for you?”

“What if anything, do you find challenging about these exercises? Why might that be?”

Explain that this technique can be used anywhere and that it is one of the easiest ones to do subtly.

**Post-test Questionnaire (15 minutes):** Go through the questionnaire with the participants. You will want to look through it prior to the meeting so that you can be able to explain how to fill it out. You will explain that the purpose of this questionnaire is to determine whether there is a need for a relaxation training workshop. Give them time to fill out the questionnaire and assist participants if needed.

**Talking Circle (45 minutes *May require more time):** A talking circle will be used at the end of the workshop to help participants debrief and discuss anything they may be feeling.

**Recap and Check In (10 minutes):** Discuss with the group what they thought of all
techniques and answer any questions they may have.
Handouts Session 3

Handout 3.1

PERCEIVED STRESS SCALE

The questions in this scale ask you about your feelings and thoughts during the last month. In each case, you will be asked to indicate by circling how often you felt or thought a certain way.

Name_________________________________________Date_______________________
Age______ Gender (Circle): ___________ Other________________________

0 = Never 1 = Almost Never 2 = Sometimes 3 = Fairly Often 4 = Very Often

1. In the last month, how often have you been upset because of something that happened unexpectedly? 0 1 2 3 4
2. In the last month, how often have you felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life? 0 1 2 3 4
3. In the last month, how often have you felt nervous and "stressed"? 0 1 2 3 4
4. In the last month, how often have you felt confident about your ability to handle your personal problems? 0 1 2 3 4
5. In the last month, how often have you felt that things were going your way? 0 1 2 3 4
6. In the last month, how often have you found that you could not cope with all the things that you had to do? 0 1 2 3 4
7. In the last month, how often have you been able to control irritations in your life? 0 1 2 3 4
8. In the last month, how often have you felt that you were on top of things? 0 1 2 3 4
9. In the last month, how often have you been angered because of things that were outside of your control? 0 1 2 3 4
10. In the last month, how often have you felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them? 0 1 2 3 4

References

mind garden
info@mindgarden.com
www.mindgarden.com
Handout 3.2

Relaxation Training

Questionnaire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respond with 3 (Yes), 2 (Somewhat), or 1 (No)</th>
<th>Session 1</th>
<th>Session 2</th>
<th>Session 3</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did your muscles relax?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Were you able to quiet your mind?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you lose your sense of physical space?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you notice any change in your breathing?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did your limbs feel numb?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did your thoughts remain quiet? Not disturbing?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Were you able to ignore any outside noises?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you learn a helpful technique?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Totals | | | |

Please List any other types of feelings, thoughts or emotions that you had during Relaxation Training

________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

adapted from Carol Pierce-Davis, Ph.D. retrieved from
Handout 3.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cue Breathing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In a comfortable position:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✦ Release tension by relaxing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✦ Focus on your belly as you breathe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✦ Make your breaths slow and rhythmic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✦ With each breath let yourself become more and more relaxed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✦ With every inhalation say “breathe in”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✦ As you exhale say “relax”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✦ Repeat</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B

Participant Workbook
The Fight-or-Flight Response
Fact Sheet

What is the fight-or-flight response?
The fight-or-flight response is one of the tools your body uses to protect you from danger. When you feel threatened, the fight-or-flight response is automatically triggered, and several physiological changes prepare you to either confront or flee from the threat.

What are the symptoms of fight-or-flight?
- Increased heart rate
- Dizziness or lightheadedness
- Shaking
- Racing thoughts
- Nausea / "butterflies" in stomach
- Sweating
- Difficulty concentrating
- Rapid, shallow breathing
- Tensed muscles

How is the fight-or-flight response triggered?
Even threats to emotional well-being, such as the fear of embarrassment before giving a presentation, can trigger the fight-or-flight response. In these cases, the symptoms often do more harm than good. An increased heart rate and sweating might help you escape from a bear, but they won’t do much to help you look cool and collected during a presentation.

Is the fight-or-flight response bad?
Everyone will experience the fight-or-flight response at times, to varying degrees. Usually, it’s natural, healthy, and not a problem. However, when the fight-or-flight response leads to excessive anger, anxiety, prolonged stress, or other problems, it might be time to intervene.

How can I manage the fight-or-flight response?
In addition to the fight-or-flight response, your body can also initiate an opposing relaxation response. Many symptoms of the relaxation response counteract fight-or-flight, such as slower and deeper breathing, relaxed muscles, and a slower heart rate. The relaxation response can be triggered by using relaxation skills, such as deep breathing or progressive muscle relaxation.
Symptoms of Stress

Stress is one way that our bodies respond to the demands of our lives. A little bit of stress can be healthy—it keeps us alert and productive. However, all too often, we experience too much stress. Too much stress can result in serious physical, emotional, and behavioral symptoms.

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<td>✓ Sleep difficulties</td>
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<td>✓ Nausea</td>
<td>✓ Decreased sex drive</td>
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<td>✓ Increased sweating</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Weakened immune system</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Deep Breathing

✧ Sit or lie flat in a comfortable position.

✧ Put one hand on your belly just below your ribs and the other hand on your chest.

✧ Take a deep breath in through your nose, and let your belly push your hand out. Your chest should not move.

✧ Breathe out through pursed lips as if you were whistling. Feel the hand on your belly go in, and use it to push all the air out.

✧ Do this breathing 3 to 10 times. Take your time with each breath.

✧ Notice how you feel at the end of the exercise.

Counting Breathing

✧ Start taking slow deep breaths.

✧ As you are breathing start counting your breaths.

✧ Each time you let your breath out count.

✧ Focus on your breathing

✧ As you inhale focus on the air coming in through your nostrils filling your lungs.
✧ Focus on your chest filling with air.

✧ As you exhale focus on your chest falling and the air going through your lips.

✧ Count.

✧ Keep breathing slowly focusing on your breath and counting each breath.
Progressive Muscle Relaxation Script

Progressive muscle relaxation is an exercise that relaxes your mind and body by progressively tensing and relaxing muscle groups throughout your entire body. You will tense each muscle group vigorously, but without straining, and then suddenly release the tension and feel the muscle relax. You will tense each muscle for about 5 seconds. If you have any pain or discomfort at any of the targeted muscle groups feel free to omit that step. Throughout this exercise you may visualize the muscles tensing and a wave of relaxation flowing over them as you release that tension. It is important that you keep breathing throughout the exercise. Now let’s begin.

Begin by finding a comfortable position either sitting or lying down in a location where you will not be interrupted. Allow your attention to focus only on your body. If you begin to notice your mind wandering, bring it back to the muscle you are working on.

Take a deep breath through your abdomen, hold for a few seconds, and exhale slowly. Again, as you breathe notice your stomach rising and your lungs filling with air.
As you exhale, imagine the tension in your body being released and flowing out of your body. And again inhale... and exhale. Feel your body already relaxing.

As you go through each step, remember to keep breathing.

Now let’s begin. Tighten the muscles in your forehead by raising your eyebrows as high as you can. Hold for about five seconds. And abruptly release feeling that tension fall away.

Pause for about 10 seconds.

Now smile widely, feeling your mouth and cheeks tense. Hold for about 5 seconds, and release, appreciating the softness in your face.

Pause for about 10 seconds.

Next, tighten your eye muscles by squinting your eyelids tightly shut. Hold for about 5 seconds, and release.

Pause for about 10 seconds.
Gently pull your head back as if to look at the ceiling. Hold for about 5 seconds, and release, feeling the tension melting away.

Pause for about 10 seconds.

Now feel the weight of your relaxed head and neck sink.

Breath in...and out.

In...and out.

Let go of all the stress

In...and out.

Now, tightly, but without straining, clench your fists and hold this position until I say stop. Hold for about 5 seconds, and release.

Pause for about 10 seconds.
Now, flex your biceps. Feel that buildup of tension. You may even visualize that muscle tightness. **Hold for about 5 seconds, and release,** enjoying that feeling of limpness.

Breath in...and out.

Now tighten your triceps by extending your arms out and locking your elbows. **Hold for about 5 seconds, and release.**

Pause for about 10 seconds.

Now lift your shoulders up as if they could touch your ears. **Hold for about 5 seconds, and quickly release,** feeling their heaviness.

Pause for about 10 seconds.

Tense your upper back by pulling your shoulders back trying to make your shoulder blades touch. **Hold for about 5 seconds, and release.** Pause for about 10 seconds. **Tighten your chest by taking a deep breath in,** hold for about 5 seconds, and exhale,
blowing out all the tension.

Now tighten the muscles in your stomach by sucking in. Hold for about 5 seconds, and release. Pause for about 10 seconds.

Gently arch your lower back. Hold for about 5 seconds, relax. Pause for about 10 seconds.

Feel the limpness in your upper body letting go of the tension and stress, hold for about 5 seconds, and relax.

Tighten your thighs by pressing your knees together, as if you were holding a penny between them. Hold for about 5 seconds...and release.

Pause for about 10 seconds.

Now flex your feet, pulling your toes towards you and feeling the tension in your calves. Hold for about 5 seconds, and relax, feel the weight of your legs sinking down.
Pause for about 10 seconds.

Curl your toes under tensing your feet. Hold for about 5 seconds, release. Pause for about 10 seconds. Now imagine a wave of relaxation slowly spreading through your body beginning at your head and going all the way down to your feet.

Feel the weight of your relaxed body.

Breathe in...and out...in...out....in...out.
## Cue Breathing

In a comfortable position:

- Release tension by relaxing
- Focus on your belly as you breathe
- Make your breaths slow and rhythmic
- With each breath let yourself become more and more relaxed
- With every inhalation say “breathe in”
- As you exhale say “relax”
- Repeat